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ABSTRACT

This discussion of an urban professional development school (PDS) partnership between Milwaukee Public Schools (Wisconsin) and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee documents changes made and experienced by teachers, particularly changes related to moving from an ineffective basic skills approach to reading, in a school context focused on student deficits, to an approach to literacy which emphasizes experimentation, growth, and risk-taking as part of school culture. Thirty-four teachers were interviewed to identify the kinds of changes they were implementing and their perceptions of changes in students and the school as a whole. Findings are reported on three topics: patterns of teacher change, schoolwide change, and student change. The reading program's primary goals were to develop positive attitudes toward and interest in reading and to increase time spent reading. The core of the PDS partnership was supporting good literacy teaching through building multiple levels of interconnected, reciprocal support among teachers, university faculty, university students, children, parents, and administrators. The web of support included mentoring beginning teachers, an on-site reading methods course for preservice teachers, and activities to help practicing teachers master a new instructional paradigm that seeks to develop an integrated language arts program where instruction is embedded in authentic reading materials and writing in the context of authentic tasks. (IAH)

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Portrait of an Urban Professional Development School

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Portrait of an Urban Professional Development School

The concept of professional development schools seems to have captured the imagination of teacher educators as a powerful way to proceed in linking the learning and growth of new and practicing teachers. Professional development schools are to be places in which teachers inquire into their own practice and places which model the most powerful approaches to instruction (Holmes Group, 1990; Levine, 1988). Although the support base for this important trend seems to be growing, documentation of what professional development schools actually look like at various stages in their evolution and how variations on the school-university partnership play out in different sites is scant.

Embedded in this general call for documentation is the need to give specific consideration to the growth of professional development schools in urban areas--and particularly in the troubled inner cities of the nation's large, metropolitan school districts. While agreement exists regarding the general parameters for professional development schools, there is less definition regarding the characteristics of schools so designated. Arguing for their location in urban schools, Pugach and Pasch (1992) point out that it is in these settings that the most pressing educational challenges, namely, issues of diversity and equity, can be most readily explored. These sites also have the greatest potential for overcoming teachers' stereotypes regarding children's capabilities for learning. Given both the extraordinary challenges practicing urban teachers face and the pressing need to prepare prospective teachers to work in urban schools, the definition of what constitutes an appropriate set of professional development activities at the initial stages of a PDS relationship in urban settings and the outcomes to which such activities might lead deserve particular attention.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a portrait of an urban elementary professional development school located in the center of a large midwestern city. In it we document the changes teachers go through individually and collectively and the impact of those changes on children. Specificially, we have attempted to describe the interaction of all of the sources of support as university faculty, students, and school staff work together for change. In this case, the change involves moving from an ineffective basic skills approach to reading in a school context focused on student deficits to a stimulating, meaningful and personally powerful approach to literacy which emphasizes experimentation, growth, and risk-taking as part of the school culture.

The portrait begins with a brief description of the school setting and what literacy learning looked like at the start of the partnership. This is followed by a discussion of our conception of what it means to support professional development within such a partnership, and the interrelated roles of prospective teachers, practicing teachers, university faculty, and children in this relationship. Then, through interviews with the teachers and schoolwide specialists, as well as our own observations of their practice as teachers of literacy, we depict changes that have occurred since the partnership began. We conclude with implications of this experience for professional development schools generally, and for the professional development of urban teachers in particular.

The Setting: A "Typical" Urban School

When the PDS partnership between Milwaukee Public Schools and the University of Wisconsin-Center for Teacher Education began in 1988, the school we describe in this paper could be characterized as a typical urban school in distress. Demographically, the majority of the school's approximately 650 students are from low-income families and over 99 percent are African-American;

many families receive public assistance. Achievement scores on traditional tests have been among the lowest in the city for several years. Physically, the four-story building, though well maintained, is nearly 100 years old; acoustics are a major problem, and there is no space for the entire student body to meet for performances or school assemblies.

The prevailing instructional paradigm was a decontextualized, skill driven approach grounded in the use of basal texts and workbooks; a focus on the children's academic deficits dominated. Students did little actual reading or writing, and observations indicated that in most classrooms reading and writing were considered to be a chore--something you "had" to do in school. The exception was the kindergarten program, which was in the process of shifting to the High Scope curriculum; future plans included extending this program to the first grade. Although there were individual differences among teachers, the pervasive ethos was one in which teachers followed the texts as they were structured and exercised little curricular decision making. Remedial and Chapter One reading teachers followed a strict pull-out model, also driven by skill remediation.

As a result of this approach to instruction, the learning context was clearly not motivating for the students; little pleasure seemed to be associated with learning. Although schoolwide efforts at change were discussed in staff meetings, no evidence of their implementation was apparent. Student work was not typically displayed in the hallways, and classroom doors were often closed. Few cross-class activities took place, and as is all too common in schools, a sense of isolation typified the day-to-day operation of classrooms.

As a place to practice teaching, the school was a congenial one and many teachers enjoyed working with their colleagues. However, this sense of

collegiality did not extend past the realm of social interactions; although teachers might play volleyball together each week, they did not interact in any substantive way around professional issues, and no common professional agenda existed. Some teachers had been at the building for many years; other were new. This was not a building to which teachers voluntarily transferred. Staff turnover was great, and in any given year several beginning teachers usually were placed in the building. Each year brought a new set of questions regarding which new teachers would make it; it was not uncommon to hear some teachers who were new to the building regret their transfer to it. Despite the sense of personal caring on the part of the staff, the school enjoyed a poor reputation in the district--probably due to its location in the core of the inner city and its achievement levels (published annually in the local paper). Also, a sense of increasing frustration was beginning to be felt because of the students' consistently poor academic performance and the increased level of disciplinary problems. Although an occasional student teacher was placed in the school, the university had virtually no presence.

A detailed chronology of PDS activities at the school is available elsewhere (Pugach & Pasch, 1992). In terms of the progression of these activities, the focus on literacy was established prior to the second full year of the partnership and coincided with the adoption of a literature-based basal reading series. During the winter of the same year, faculty unanimously agreed on a set of broad goals for the school's literacy program at meetings conducted by university liaisons. Two of these goals, to increase time spent reading and to develop positive attitudes toward and interest in reading, became the main focus of professional development efforts for the 1990-91 school year. Others included developing strategic, independent readers and developing readers who read different types of materials for a variety of purposes.

The School-University Partnership as an Interlocking Web of Support

At the core of this professional development school partnership is the goal of supporting good teaching for children; specifically in this school, the focus is on good literacy teaching. To build toward this goal, multiple levels of interconnected, reciprocal support were needed. This included supporting teachers in their growth efforts, university faculty in their functioning in the school culture, university students in making the transition from student to professional, children in their literacy learning, parents in understanding new literacy paradigms, and administrators in moving the school to a new level of growth. For example, university faculty could not give support if they did not feel welcome in teachers' classrooms or in the principal's office and could not get support if teachers could not talk with them on an ongoing basis--and this often meant during the school day. University students were supported if teachers were willing to let them practice contemporary literacy methods in their classrooms. Classroom teachers were supported when they were provided with time to talk to unversity students and their instructors about literacy practices. The basis for this web of support, of course, was establishing mutual trust and credibility among all of the stakeholders.

To sustain the web of support within the context of the common goal of improving literacy teaching, the role the university liaisons defined for themselves was to engage in any activity that advanced these goals. Often teachers and the principal requested input and assistance directly. At other times a request might be initiated indirectly, and at other times the liaisons initiated both formal and informal activities they believed were appropriate. Interactions between the liaisons and teachers, aides, parents, administrators, children, and university students in the building on any given day often

occurred naturally as a result of their being in the building nearly two days a week each.

In addition, within the flexible roles they established, university liaisons supported individual and group growth by providing scaffolded instruction both in terms of literacy teaching and learning and professional decision making in general. Conceptualizing this work as scaffolding meant that the specific tasks were only broadly defined by the general goals set jointly with the teachers; the day-to-day interactions were shaped by the various levels of teacher development and the amount of change teachers were ready and willing to handle. This approach also meant that the university liaisons needed to interact frequently with each other, the principal, teachers, and the on-site teacher-liaison to determine where immediate support was most needed. This was a situation, then, where all the stakeholders took varying levels of responsibility for the process of restructuring the school. An atmosphere of ongoing, dependable support began to unfold and was sustained by this array of activities. Each interaction strengthened the linkages among partners and contributed to the building of trust in and support for common goals.

Shifting the Literacy Paradigm

The thrust of the new instructional paradigm was to develop an integrated language arts program where instruction was embedded in reading authentic materials, such as children's literature, and writing in the context of authentic tasks. To put it simply, the goal was to develop a program where children learned to read and write by engaging heavily in these activities. Teachers were learning to make curriculum and instructional decisions based on observations of children and their own professional judgments.

Time was spent in helping teachers gain a pragmatic understanding of the developmental patterns of reading and writing among elementary school children. Understanding developmental patterns provided teachers with a framework for observing their students with an eye toward identifying what children could do on their own and what they could do with the assistance of others, namely, their teachers and peers (see Vygotsky, 1978). Of major interest were the literacy behaviors children demonstrated which were approximations of mature literacy. For example, for the first time in their teaching lives, many teachers allowed their students to write in journals using temporary spellings. These temporary spellings illustrated a wide range of approximations of standard spellings such as letter name spelling, "R U DF" (Are you deaf?) and phonemic spelling, "katrpilr" (caterpillar). Teachers also accepted memorization of texts as an approximation of mature reading for emergent readers, who were not yet decoding. These are two examples of literacy learning behaviors which would have been considered unacceptable in the decontextualized skill and textbook driven curriculum formerly embraced by the school.

Supporting the Paradigm Shift

The interlocking web of support needed for professional growth and development in literacy included a wide range of activities. To provide teachers with the motivation and background to begin to make the changes they wanted to make in their practice consistent with this paradigm, periodic staff meetings and half-day sessions were held on contemporary approaches to literacy instruction. To provide day-to-day assistance, liaisons worked directly with teachers through individual conferences and weekly "office hours," casual conversations, telephone conversations, classroom demonstrations, and co-teaching activities. Besides experimenting with a variety of ways to meet

the goals, teachers, individually and in partnerships, the majority of teachers also selected one aspect of their literacy curriculum they wanted to change through action research. The scope of these projects reflected various levels of teachers' individual development, and ranged from a single, focused change to altering the entire literacy program in a classroom. Regular meetings provided an important opportunity for teachers to share the progress of their work collegially. Although the specific goals involved improving attitudes and increasing the sheer amount of reading and writing that took place, professional development activities were also directed toward supporting other literacy goals the teachers had set.

Not only were projects implemented at the classroom level, but university liaisons also worked directly with the school's reading specialist to create a supportive environment school wide literacy. Further, material support in the form of instructional resources was provided jointly from the university and the school.

Support for Beginning Teachers

A specific part of the web of support involved mentoring beginning teachers. Because five of the teachers were beginning their first year at the start of 1990-91, and two additional teachers were new to the building, it was important to support this group of teachers specifically as they coped with the pressures of their first year at the school and for many, their first full year of teaching. Supporting and mentoring beginning teachers was the focus of much of the work of the on-site teacher-liaison, who was released from her teaching responsibilities three half days a week to support PDS work. As a result, beginning teachers received both specific support for literacy teaching and learning and general support to smoothe the necessarily tough first year of teaching.

Despite their status as newcomers and the special challenges of the school, all of these teachers were actively involved in professional development activities. They eagerly sought support for how to implement their ideas and expressed relief at being placed in a school where they were free to try new approaches in a supportive environment.

The Role of Prospective Teachers

What support would prospective teachers give and receive for professional development activities in this setting? We reasoned that our teacher education students would benefit from preservice experiences in an urban school that was in the midst of positive change and that was developing a professional identity in a supportive environment. Therefore, we did not hesitate to place students in the building for their individual introductory field experiences as well as for group visits. Small numbers of student teachers were also placed at the site.

Specific to the literacy agenda, a reading methods class was taught on site in the spring of 1991, just as the teachers were getting heavily involved in changing their literacy teaching practice. In pairs or triads, preservice students worked in primary and intermediate classrooms to practice, demonstrate, and model methods consistent with the teachers' identified goals for their students' literacy learning. As practicing teachers were relearning what it meant to prepare their students for meaningful reading and writing, preservice students were supporting that growth through guided work in school. Practicing teachers participated in the portfolio evaluations for these preservice students. Our position was that it was not essential for prospective teachers to observe only model practice. What was perhaps more important was to have them observe and participate actively in the transition,

watching teachers change their practice, experiment and take risks in their teaching, and reflect on this collegially.

Beyond Professional Development in Literacy

However, support for improving literacy teaching was not an end in itself; rather, it served as a template for supporting changes in teachers' general patterns of decision making as professionals. The new literacy paradigm was based on the need for teachers to make independent, thoughtful decisions regarding issues of curriculum. It provided opportunities for teachers to consider alternative approaches to assessment based on observation of children's literacy behavior. The presence of university students also placed teachers in the position of explaining their teaching choices to prospective teachers.

In addition to the generalizability of these professional dispositions, the partnership also provided personal support as teachers went through the difficult daily challenges of teaching in a urban school. Finally, and largely unspoken, was the fact that the ongoing presence of the university in various forms signalled a belief in a school which was previously disregarded and in the potential of its teachers and students.

Method

Given the context of the web of support and the new paradigm for literacy instruction, teachers were interviewed in October of 1991 to identify the kinds of changes they were implementing and their perceptions of changes in the students and in the school as a whole. We related these interviews to our observations in order to describe patterns of change among the teachers.

Thirty-four teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule (see Figure 1), which was piloted during the month prior to the interviews reported here. Only teachers who had taught in the building during

the prior year were included. This totalled five kindergarten teachers; 19 teachers in grades 1-5; and ten specialists including those for learning disabilities, reading (4), art, science, music, and math (2). For these 34 teachers, the range of teaching experience was between one and 29 years and the mean was 11 years; the range at the school itself was between one and 24 years and the mean was 6 years. Nine teachers were male and 25 were female.

Interviews took place at the school before, during, or after school, depending on the teacher's schedule and ranged from 30 minutes to one hour. All interviews were conducted by one of the authors, who took extensive notes during each session and wrote up the interview immediately following its conclusion. Further, each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed, with the exception of one teacher who did not wish to be tape-recorded and two recordings that were not usable. In these three latter cases, the extensive notes formed the basis for the analysis.

To analyze these data, each of the three authors read every interview to identify the most salient themes related to change. Based on this initial reading, a tentative coding system was established to identify changes in teachers' practice, children's behavior, and in the school as a whole. Using this system, each author then coded the interviews individually and met to determine the reliability of the categories. At a subsequent meeting, a sample from each grade level was analyzed jointly and disagreements were discussed and resolved regarding coding. Also at this meeting, levels of teacher change were defined based upon the data themselves, and corroborated by the authors' observations in the school.

Interviews with the 19 classroom teachers in grades 1-5 formed the basis for data relating to change in children's behavior; kindergarten teachers were excluded because most of their children were attending the school for the first

time during 1991-92. Data on teachers' change is based on interviews with all teachers except specialists for art, science, music and mathematics. Finally, all interviews were used in the analysis for schoolwide change. Along with author observations, interviews with the ten specialists were utilized as a source of triangulation regarding schoolwide change.

Results and Discussion

In this section, we provide a description of three aspects of change that have taken place at this professional development school since the focus on literacy began. These changes are divided into three topics: (1) patterns of teacher change, (2) schoolwide change, and (3) student change.

Patterns of Teacher Change

Like others (Loucks-Horsley & Stiegelbauer, 1991), we are aware that although teachers may have similar inservice and professional growth opportunities, what they take from those experiences and how they adapt the ideas in their own settings is not only highly variable, but it is developmental. As we examined the interviews and related them to our observations of these teachers, we looked for patterns of developmental change and were able to identify five levels of teacher engagement along a developmental continuum: (1) no engagement in professional development school activities or the new instructional paradigm; (2) some engagement in professional development school activities but no change in instructional paradigm; (3) engagement in professional development school activities and change in the instructional paradigm; (4) engagement in professional development school activities, change in the instructional paradigm, and beginning metacognitive awareness of their work; and (5) engagement in professional development school activities, change in the instructional paradigm, and full metacognitive awareness of their work.

The first two patterns are firmly embedded in the deficit paradigm. Level one is a level of no change. Of the 29 teachers at this school who teach reading and writing, four teachers stayed firmly with the deficit model and textbook curriculum. Typically, these teachers described student literacy negatively and attributed students' poor performance to last year's teachers who didn't get the children on level, to parents who didn't prepare their children properly for school, and to the low ability level and poor attitudes of the children.

The second level included three teachers who tried some of the new ideas as interesting activities which were used as add-ons to a textbook curriculum. Their talk focused on activity routines and involved minimal reflection on children's learning processes. Comments revealed that they were beginning to accept some approximations in both writing and reading by allowing the students to do temporary spelling in journals and by prompting children to figure out reading miscues on their own. However, most activity was grounded in the old paradigm.

The next three levels of development represent teachers who are more clearly working toward a child centered literacy curriculum. Our interviews and observations indicated that 22 teachers were operating at these levels. Level three consisted of ten teachers who were using their textbooks flexibly to meet student needs. They had incorporated and integrated a number of child centered activities and procedures, which deviated from the textbook, into their regular routines. At this level, teacher talk centered on the routines associated with implementing activities but with little reflection on student learning processes.

The nine teachers at level four were solidly embedding classroom literacy routines and activities in the child centered paradigm. Much of their

curriculum building was collaborative, with children making definite contributions to the process. Teachers' comments reflected that they were viewing children in terms of their assets and were searching for the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) as the basis of instruction. Although most of their actions fit the new paradigm, these teachers were only beginning to articulate the children's learning processes through reflections on lessons and student performance.

Three teachers were at the fifth level. This is like level four except that these teachers were able to articulate the characteristics of a child centered, teacher decision making model in terms of their own lessons, school curriculum development, and children's learning. Not only did they implement child centered activities, but they also knew why to use them, how they fit into the new paradigm, and how to develop consistency in their programs.

Evidence that the majority of teachers in the school are, in fact, shifting to the new paradigm comes from their own reports of the most salient changes in their reading and writing instructional practices. This includes (a) reduced or no reliance on basals, workbooks and teacher manuals--71%; (b) students reading and writing daily--57%; (c) more student choice in reading and writing--50%; (d) more prompting and coaching of students to find answers on their own--57%; and (e) increased use of cooperative learning--50%.

These responses suggest that the prevailing instructional paradigm was beginning to shift for many of the teachers from one of minimal curricular decision-making to one where teachers are acting as curriculum interpreters (Ben-Peretz, 1990). Instead of feeling that they "have to finish a basal" or assigning writing topics from the teacher's manual, teachers typically reported that they were making their own decisions about how to use the curriculum. Teachers who were continuing their use of the basal were supplementing it with

a wide variety of tradebooks, magazines and writing assignments which promote student independence and choice. Teachers also reported other practices designed to make the curriculum more child-centered and less teacher-directed. To support the concept of student choice, many teachers developed extensive classroom libraries. In some classes, students were being encouraged to pursue their own interests through individual research. At least half of the teachers were encouraging their students to use each other as sources of help through partner reading, reading in groups, and peer coaching in reading and writing. In addition to providing more choice in what students read and write, teachers were using other strategies to promote independence. For example, many promoted students' use of temporary spelling in their writing. In reading, students were encouraged to use specific reading comprehension strategies such as previewing a book, activating background knowledge, and looking at picture and context clues.

Teachers also reported taking a more developmental approach to reading and writing evaluation. Instead of evaluating and labelling students on the basis of standardized test scores, teachers, particularly at the kindergarten and first grade levels, were looking at their students developmentally and tailoring their teaching to student needs. They were beginning to experiment with the use of including progressive observational accounts of each child's reading and writing behaviors; two action research projects focused specifically on portfolio use in the primary grades.

These self-reports of teacher change were corroborated by interviews with six specialists in the school who regularly visit all of the classrooms for art, music, math, science, and reading. A number of these specialists mentioned seeing a greater variety of reading materials in the classrooms. "The rooms are just filled with books," according to one specialist. They also

noted the decreased use of basal readers and workbooks across classrooms, the increased reading of tradebooks, the use of personal journals and temporary spelling in many classrooms, increased student choice in reading and writing, and the widespread use of cooperative learning and peer coaching throughout the school.

In addition to reflecting on their individual practice, almost a third of the teachers were seeking additional ways to develop the paradigm more fully schoolwide. For example, several mentioned the need for more work on strategic writing instruction and the need for more printers in the school to support student publishing. Others recognized the continuing need for additional books to match the range of children's interests and reading abilities. Still others were interested in exploring new methods of evaluation further to better fit the new paradigm.

Schoolwide Change

The teachers in this school seemed to be breaking out of the traditional isolation discussed by Lortie (1975). Many were beginning to feel a sense of connectedness to each other as they participated together in the efforts of the professional development school. When asked for the reason for change in student reading and writing behaviors, nearly a third of the teachers specifically mentioned, as one put it, "our schoolwide focus on making literature and writing important and meaningful to kids." Nearly two-thirds mentioned what was going on in classrooms other than their own or, in the case of the specialists, what was going on across classrooms. Over and over, classroom teachers mentioned the extensive reading and journal writing that their own students had experienced in previous grades and how "the kids are getting used to reading and writing." Several teachers mentioned an increase in displays of student writing in the halls, the Book Worm that wound around

the school documenting titles and authors of books each child read, the increased number of books in the classrooms, and the publication of books written and illustrated by students.

This visibility of classroom literacy experiences has contributed to creating new norms for literacy instruction in the school. According to one teacher, "even the teachers who have not been real involved with the new efforts in reading and writing are doing more constructive silent reading, partner reading and they're doing more reading to students. These are teachers who in the past just strictly followed the teacher's manual. It's gotten to where some teachers are beginning to feel left out." And while some teachers were perhaps feeling left out because of the new norms, others seemed to be feeling a greater responsibility to connect their efforts to those of other teachers in the school. In the words of one second grade teacher: "Kindergarten and first grade teachers are using the big books and literature; there's a lot of writing going on. By the time they're up in the second grade ... they're excited about reading and writing and hopefully we can continue that into the upper grades."

Coinciding with this greater sense of connectedness around the goal of improved literacy was an overall improvement in teacher and student morale in the school, according to seven teachers who have been in the school for at least four years. One of them described it this way: "Five years ago we had a lot of people on the faculty that were real negative .... We felt we were in a hostile environment .... There was a lot more rudeness from the children .... Now almost everybody is here because they want to be here and so it's just a happier place." All seven mentioned that both teachers and students seemed happier. Four of these seven teachers noted that there was less fighting among students in the building. One of the teachers felt that the staff had become

"more receptive and more friendly." She gave an example of a parent who two years ago was ready to pull her child out of the school but changed her mind last year because of the change in the climate.

Several teachers indicated that they feel part of a change process which, in the words of one teacher, is "snowballing." One teacher who has been in the school for ten years remarked, "I feel that we've come so far ... I think now we are working toward being a school that could stand up in any other area against any other school."

Student Change

How did teachers describe the impact of these changes on their students? Since most students in this school enter at the K5 level, for this section we considered the reports by all of the regular classroom teachers in grades 1-5 and all of the school specialists. Over three-quarters of the teachers reported greater enjoyment and interest in reading and writing among their students. They also observed more voluntary reading and writing and increased independent use of specific reading and writing strategies. Over half reported that the children showed greater confidence in reading and writing.

A number of teachers commented that they were encountering fewer complaints about reading and writing in their classrooms. Enthusiasm, care, and pride replaced whining, particularly when teachers asked students to write. Instead, students were approaching reading and writing eagerly. They were choosing more challenging books to read, sharing their books and personal stories with each other enthusiastically, and doing more voluntary reading and writing. Throughout the grades students were asking to take reading and writing materials home. In art class many students were asking to write stories more often to go along with their artwork. According to the majority of teachers, students were also independently using many of the writing

strategies introduced through professional development experiences when they encountered difficulties in their reading and writing. Furthermore, teachers were noticing that students were coaching each other to use these strategies.

In addition to changes in the students' reading and writing behaviors, teachers, particularly the specialist teachers in music, art, math, and science who see all children in all classrooms, noted other changes in students' behavior. Both the art and music teachers as well as several classroom teachers felt that the students were more focused and attentive. They seemed more able to stick with a task for a longer period of time. A number of other teachers commented that the students seemed more willing to help each other and were acting more positively toward each other and toward teachers. Still others mentioned that they were seeing more effort and more participation from their students and that their students seemed to have a more positive attitude toward school.

Finally, six teachers noted that students seemed to be using their developing literacy skills across the curriculum. The art teacher observed that students seemed "more visually acute." When looking at pictures they were better able to generate possibilities for what they were seeing. The two math specialists and the classroom teacher who teaches math to all of the students of one grade noted that the students approached word problems more positively and were achieving better when they did math word problems. Two other teachers commented that students were more readily reading their science and social studies books, and more students seemed to be connecting their background knowledge to new words and concepts in these subject areas.

Conclusion

The professional development school provided a positive, supportive environment for change. Most teachers changed in some way, although the degree

to which they embraced the new literacy paradigm varied greatly. Using a variety of activities and techniques, in the context of common goals, served to unite teachers in their efforts to impact children's lives. Teachers and students were generally enjoying reading and writing more and doing more of it in the evolving process of taking ownership for their own learning. As teachers observed students' successes, they also began to feel successful, which resulted in more teacher efforts to create conditions for more student success. Success was a generative force. For most of these teachers, the interactions as part of the PDS relationship were the first times they had experienced this level of growth, challenge, and collaboration in their practice. These disempowered urban teachers were becoming empowered and developing professional personas.

Had the school been bypassed as a PDS site because of its problems, the potential the literacy work uncovered might have been lost. Equally, if not more important, a site which better approximated the kind of school to which preservice teachers were likely to be assigned would also have been bypassed. By locating a PDS in the urban setting, preservice students could witness and participate in the kind of growth that is in fact possible even in schools which, by practice and reputation both, have been "in trouble." For teacher education programs to forsake schools that are in need of great support for those that may be more ready to accept the mantle of professional development activities seems antithetical to the mission of urban education. While it is harder work, integration of the two is necessary to insure that preservice students see the possibilities for growth in urban schools and see themselves as part of that growth process.

By working simultaneously on all fronts within an urban school, with teachers, school administration, and preservice students to impact children's

literacy learning, opportunities for professional growth were maximized. The growth patterns of teachers' literacy instruction simply could not have been achieved without the full complement of activities spanning the continuum from prospective to practicing teacher. It is difficult, if not impossible, to identify a single facet of the partnership as making the difference. The collegial ethos that emerged in the school among all stakeholders continues to be a lesson in the nature of relationships between professionals and the kind of mutual support that is needed to cope with the day-to-day challenges of urban teaching. Teachers were learning how to develop professionally. University liaisons were learning how to work with teachers, how to understand professional development and give definition to the term "professional development school." University students were having first experiences in what it means to be a professional in a professionally developing setting. First year teachers too, gained support through involvement and were major contributors in changing literacy instruction; they planned more complex approaches for the coming year and became part of teaching teams as a means of support. We were all learning together--enmeshed in the web of support. The impact of the work affected nearly everyone in individual and personal ways and the school as a whole. Nearly everyone was engaged in activity that directly or indirectly impacted the quality of teaching for children.

To make the web of support as strong as possible between teachers and university students, selection of classrooms for student placement was guided by levels of teacher growth and development. The basic criteria were (1) that the teachers were engaged in attempting to make the paradigm shift, and (2) were willing to work out new ideas in their classrooms by including preservice students in the process. Teachers in levels three, four, and five along the continuum described earlier met these criteria. Teachers in these

levels were experimenting with new ideas in their classrooms, working toward school goals, demonstrating efforts to develop a child centered curriculum, and engaging in teacher decision making. This created numerous opportunities for students to become involved in the same processes themselves. University students became part of the change process and were pulled into the web.

An important implication of this ongoing work is recognizing that there is as yet no agreement on what it actually means to begin to be a professional development school and that this topic deserves much attention from teacher educators involved in PDS efforts. In this case, it is safe to say that PDS efforts started with a partially committed staff (despite a schoolwide vote to be designated as a PDS), few resources, and little sense of professionalism. Since 1988, and particularly in the past year as a result of the interaction of literacy-based activities, the ethos has changed to the point where a new sense of professionalism has been infused, and the teachers are trying on professional growth as its suits their level of development. Teachers' understanding of children as a result of the literacy interviews, their belief in classroom change as a result of their action research projects, and their knowledge that support is available in the context of the work they are interested in accomplishing have converged to begin to produce a sense of professionalism, for themselves and for the preservice students with whom they work--perhaps for the first time in their careers as urban teachers.

It is clear that changing the soul of a school is a slow process marked by gradual approximations of the school vision. Recognition of the nature of deep level change implies that there must be a long term commitment to the process. Recently, Duffy (1991) revised his original estimate for making lasting change in schools from five years to ten. Engaging in and sustaining a change process, while conducting the daily business of schools, and living

life, is both time consuming and challenging. Accepting the concept of a professional development school means a commitment to such change on the part of multiple stakeholders who operate in interlocking ways, within a web of support that maximizes learning for all participants.

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1. What are you noticing about your students at the beginning of this year in reading and writing compared to your students at the beginning of last year?

2. What have you noticed about their attitudes toward reading compared to last year?

3. What kinds of things are your students doing that show you their attitudes toward reading? (Note: if more than one behavior is mentioned, try to elicit an order of importance and an idea about frequency).

4. If a change in behavior and/or attitude has been noted by the teacher: What do you think accounts for this change?

5. We've talked about attitudes. Now let's talk about specific reading strategies you see your students using. What specific reading strategies have you observed your students using independently? Which ones with your prompting them? Which ones most often?

6. Let's shift our discussion to writing. What kids of writing have your students been doing this year?

7. How would you compare your students' attitudes toward writing this year to last year?

8. What kinds of things are your students doing in writing that shows you their attitudes toward writing? (Note: If more than one, try to elicit an order of importance and an idea about frequency).

9. If a change in attitude toward writing has been noted by the teacher: What do you think accounts for this change?

10. Have you noticed your students using any particular writing strategies independently? any with your prompting them?

11. Have any children in your class this year talked about, commented on, or asked you to use reading or writing activities they were exposed to last year? Have you had any feedback from parents regarding their children's reading/writing experiences either here or at home?

12. Is there anything else you'd like to share about anything you're noticing about your students' reading or writing this year?

Figure 1. Semi-structured interview schedule.

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